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STATE OF WISCONSIN  
EXAMINING BOARD OF ARCHITECTS, PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS,  
DESIGNERS AND LAND SURVEYORS, ARCHITECT SECTION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR :	
A LICENSE TO PRACTICE ARCHITECTURE :	FINAL DECISION
:	AND ORDER
ORONZO VENTRELLA, :	LS9402031ARC
APPLICANT. :	

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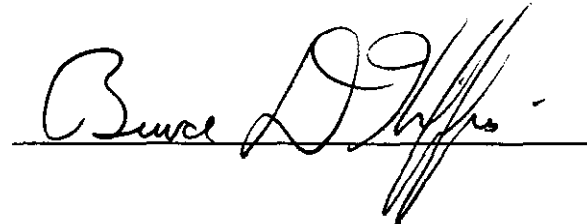
The State of Wisconsin, Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors, having considered the above-captioned matter and having reviewed the record and the Proposed Decision of the Administrative Law Judge, makes the following:

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Proposed Decision annexed hereto, filed by the Administrative Law Judge, shall be and hereby is made and ordered the Final Decision of the State of Wisconsin, Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the department for rehearing and the petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information."

Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of MAY 1994.



**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
BEFORE THE EXAMINING BOARD OF ARCHITECTS, PROFESSIONAL  
ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS AND LAND SURVEYORS  
ARCHITECTS SECTION**

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**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR A LICENSE  
TO PRACTICE ARCHITECTURE**

**ORONZO VENTRELLA  
APPLICANT  
LS 9402031 ARC**

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**PROPOSED DECISION**

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The parties to this proceeding for purposes of s. 227.53, Stats. are:

Oronzo Ventrella  
4555 N. McVicker Avenue  
Chicago IL 60630

Architects Section  
Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors  
Department of Regulation and Licensing  
P.O. Box 8935  
Madison WI 53708

Division of Enforcement  
P.O. Box 8935  
Madison WI 53708

A Class 1 hearing was held in this matter on March 29, 1994. Oronzo Ventrella, applicant, appeared without counsel. The Division of Enforcement appeared by Roger Hall. Based on the entire record of this proceeding, the Administrative Law Judge recommends that the Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors, Architects Section, adopt the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order as its Final Decision in the matter.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Oronzo Ventrella sat for the June, 1993, administration of Division C of the National Council of Architects Registration Boards (NCARB) examination, and received a failing score on that Division.

2. Division C of the NCARB examination consists of a programmed, pre-packaged problem which requires the applicant to review a project statement describing in general terms a building proposal, together with associated information about the use to which the building will be put, the location of the building, and very general specifications about the materials to be used in constructing the building and the manner of its construction. The information packet includes photographs of buildings near the site of the proposed building, the relevant portions of the applicable building code, and some instructions on how to complete the examination. The applicant's task is to design a building meeting the goals of the project statement within the constraints of the specifications, create the initial drawings, and do it all within 12 hours.
3. The finished drawings are reviewed by architects who have been trained to grade this portion of the examination using a "holistic" approach. The holistic approach considers the completed drawings as a whole, with the goal of judging whether the building design, taken as a whole, provides a minimally competent response to the design problem presented. Grading is done by noting the degree to which the plans conform to the project requirements, and the degree to which the plans would provide a workable finished building. The grading does not use a specific system of demerits for each flaw or type of flaw, nor a system of specific credits for skillful design, but considers the overall effect of the good points and the bad points inherent in the plans.
4. An unstated but evident function of the examination is to test the applicant's ability to integrate all of the information provided and make reasonable inferences about the needs and preferences of the end user of the plans, and the population to be served by the construction. The instructions for the examination do not direct the examinee to consider the stated purposes of the building to make inferences about the needs and preferences of the person for whom the plans are being drawn, or in identifying the characteristics of the users of the building. However, it is evident that one of the major functions of the examination is to test the candidate's ability to identify the tasks to be accomplished in and by the building, and to design it accordingly.
5. Mr. Ventrella's examination was graded by four separate graders. All but one of the reviewers gave his solution a failing grade. Each of the graders indicated areas of weakness in the design as a solution to the problem presented.
6. The graders are limited to identifying no more than three areas of weakness, and are not given the means to critique the design. A candidate who fails the examination will know the general category in which the graders found the design deficient, but the candidate will not be able to identify the rationale of the grader in determining that the design was deficient in any category.
7. Mr. Ventrella obtained a review of the examination, during which he noted the reasons for his disagreement with the graders' conclusions that his design was weak in particular categories. Using his review as a basis, the Architects Section considered Mr. Ventrella's challenge to the examination result, and sustained the failing grade. In addition, the Section

provided Mr. Ventrella with some more specific critiques of his design solution. Those comments were also fairly general.

8. Mr. Ventrella demonstrated during the hearing that his design contained substantially all of the required elements for a passing solution to the problem. He demonstrated that in other contexts similar omissions were not considered sufficient reason to fail a solution, and that the holistic approach to grading the examination division requires the exercise of discretion by the graders.
9. Mr. Ventrella demonstrated that NCARB is dissatisfied with the wide variety of solutions which must be evaluated with the current form of the examination division, and that NCARB is revising the examination division to reduce the effect of planning ability on the result of the examination division. NCARB has found that the current form of the examination division makes candidates with poor planning skills work substantially harder than candidates with good planning skills, because the candidates with poor planning skills design more complicated solutions with more chances for weak design. NCARB is adopting a new form of the examination division which will test a broader range of design knowledge, while decreasing the effect of strong planning skills.
10. The fact that NCARB is revising its examination to reduce the impact of one specific talent on the part of some candidates is no evidence that the examination Mr. Ventrella failed was in any way unfair.
11. Architecture is a profession requiring the application of both science and art. A holistic approach to grading architectural examinations will necessarily require the balancing of technical compliance with specified required elements and consideration of a candidate's interpretation and integration of a wide scope of factors demonstrating professional judgment.
12. Mr. Ventrella's solution to the problem presented failed to incorporate several specifically required elements. Further, in addition to required elements which are patently missing from the solution, other aspects of the required design elements are missing unless one implies their existence in one context from their existence in other contexts, or from the fact that the structure would be unsound if a supporting column not clearly indicated on the drawing were omitted from the construction.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. The Architects Section of the Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to ch. 443, Stats.
2. The graphic design solution prepared by Oronzo Ventrella at the June, 1993, NCARB examination fails to demonstrate the preparedness to exercise the design skills likely to be needed by a person practicing architecture in a manner which will promote the protection of public life, safety and welfare as required by s. 443.09(4) and (5), Stats.

## ORDER

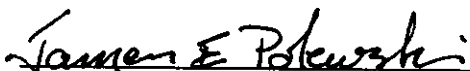
The decision of the Architects Section of the Examining Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Designers and Land Surveyors that Oronzo Ventrella failed Division C of the NCARB examination in June, 1993, is affirmed, and registration to practice architecture in Wisconsin by Oronzo Ventrella is denied.

## OPINION

Mr. Ventrella's thesis supporting his argument that his design was adequate to achieve a passing score is that no single error or omission in his design is sufficiently serious to be fatal to the basic competence of the design, and that several of the errors and omissions identified in his design were of the same character as errors in NCARB examples which were passing solutions despite the errors or omissions. Mr. Ventrella proved that thesis to be substantially true. However, the focus on the details is at the expense of the whole. While there is substantial basis for Mr. Ventrella's argument that nobody can identify which error or combination of errors it was which proved fatal to his design, the argument misses the point. The fact of the matter is that his design is demonstrably weak in several aspects, and that taken as a whole, the design clearly does not meet the expectations stated or necessarily implied by the examination instructions. Mr. Ventrella focuses on the trees, and does not see the forest.

Mr. Ventrella's design fails to incorporate all of the required elements, fails to indicate the existence of elements clearly enough to support a conclusion that they are implied, fails to show an appreciation of the purpose of the structure to be designed, fails to show an appreciation of the characteristics of the population to be served by the structure, and creates difficult or inconvenient traffic patterns within the building. It is highly improbable that Mr. Ventrella's plan communicates what he thinks it does, and I am certain that Mr. Ventrella does not appreciate that the purpose of a security station in a hallway is completely thwarted by his provision of easy access to uncontrolled roof top travel through windows to and from rooms along the hall.

Dated this 21st day of April, 1994.



James E. Polewski  
Administrative Law Judge  
P.O. Box 8935  
Madison WI 53708  
608/266-0358

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## NOTICE OF APPEAL INFORMATION

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**Notice Of Rights For Rehearing Or Judicial Review, The Times Allowed For Each, And The Identification Of The Party To Be Named As Respondent.**

**Serve Petition for Rehearing or Judicial Review on:**

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN EXAMINING BOARD OF ARCHITECTS, PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS AND LAND SURVEYORS.

1400 East Washington Avenue

P.O. Box 8935

Madison, WI 53708.

**The Date of Mailing this Decision is:**

JUNE 1, 1994.

### 1. REHEARING

Any person aggrieved by this order may file a written petition for rehearing within 20 days after service of this order, as provided in sec. 227.49 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, a copy of which is reprinted on side two of this sheet. The 20 day period commences the day of personal service or mailing of this decision. (The date of mailing this decision is shown above.)

A petition for rehearing should name as respondent and be filed with the party identified in the box above.

A petition for rehearing is not a prerequisite for appeal or review.

### 2. JUDICIAL REVIEW.

Any person aggrieved by this decision may petition for judicial review as specified in sec. 227.53, *Wisconsin Statutes* a copy of which is reprinted on side two of this sheet. By law, a petition for review must be filed in circuit court and should name as the respondent the party listed in the box above. A copy of the petition for judicial review should be served upon the party listed in the box above.

A petition must be filed within 30 days after service of this decision if there is no petition for rehearing, or within 30 days after service of the order finally disposing of a petition for rehearing, or within 30 days after the final disposition by operation of law of any petition for rehearing.

The 30-day period for serving and filing a petition commences on the day after personal service or mailing of the decision by the agency, or the day after the final disposition by operation of the law of any petition for rehearing. (The date of mailing this decision is shown above.)